

XXXVI. EXTRACTS *from the* MINUTE-BOOK *of the* SOCIETY.

Mar. 18, 1817. READ an Extract of a Letter addressed to the Secretary from Sir John Jamison, F.L.S., dated at Regentville, New South Wales, September 10, 1816, as follows :

“ I cannot avoid relating to you an extraordinary peculiarity which I have lately discovered in the *Ornithorynchus paradoxus*.—The male of this wonderful animal is provided with spurs on the hind feet or legs, like a cock. The spur is situated over a cyst of venomous fluid, and has a tube or cannula up its centre, through which the animal can, like a serpent, force the poison when it inflicts its wound. I wounded one with small shot; and on my overseer’s taking it out of the water, it stuck its spurs into the palm and back of his right hand with such force, and retained them in with such strength, that they could not be withdrawn until it was killed. The hand instantly swelled to a prodigious bulk; and the inflammation having rapidly extended to his shoulder, he was in a few minutes threatened with locked-jaw, and exhibited all the symptoms of a person bitten by a venomous snake. The pain from the first was insupportable, and cold sweats and sickness of stomach took place so alarmingly, that I found it necessary, besides the external application of oil and vinegar, to administer large quantities of the volatile alkali with opium, which I really think preserved his life. He was obliged to keep his bed for several days, and did not recover the perfect use of his hand for nine weeks. This unexpected
and

and extraordinary occurrence induced me to examine the spur of the animal; and on pressing it down on the leg the fluid squirted through the tube: but for what purpose Nature has so armed these animals is as yet unknown to me. The female is oviparous, and lives in burrows in the ground, so that it is seldom seen either on shore or in the water. The males are seen in numbers throughout our winter months only, floating and diving in all our large rivers; but they cannot continue long under water. I had one drowned by having been left during the night in a large tub of water. I have found no other substance in their stomachs than small fish and fry. They are very shy, and avoid the shot by diving and afterwards rising at a considerable distance."

Jan. 20, 1818. Mr. Lambert, V. P. communicated to the Society an Extract of a Letter from Don Jose Pavon of Madrid, one of the authors of the *Flora Peruviana*, stating that he and his companions Ruiz and Dombey had found the potatoe (*Solanum tuberosum*) growing wild in the environs of Lima, and fourteen leagues from thence on the coast of Peru, as well as in Chili; and that it is cultivated very abundantly in those countries by the Indians, who call it *Papas*.

Dr. Maton, V. P. communicated a Letter from the Rev. Revett Sheppard, F.L.S., stating that on the first of this month he shot a fine specimen of the common heron (*Ardea major*), and that its feathers were covered with a powder of a light blue colour; but in what manner this powder is secreted, or whether it occurs in the winter season only, he has not been able to ascertain.

Feb. 17. The Secretary stated, that Mr. Robert Gee has communicated to the President a specimen of *Salix cinerea*, (*Flor. Brit.* 1063, *Eng. Bot.* 1897,) with androgynous catkins,

kins, nearly half the flowers in the upper part of the catkin being male, and the rest female. It was found by himself at Duckinfield near Stockport, in Cheshire.

April 7. Read a Letter addressed to the Secretary by the Rev. Patrick Keith, F.L.S., of which the following is a copy :

DEAR SIR, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent, March 30, 1818.

In my Paper on the subject of the Developement of the Seminal Germ, published in the last volume* of the Society's Transactions, I find that I have unhappily exhibited an incorrect and imperfect representation of Mr. T. A. Knight's hypothesis on the same subject. I have said that "the grand defect of Mr. Knight's hypothesis is, that it does not at all account for the ascent of the plumelet;" a statement that proves to be erroneous; since the fact is, that Mr. Knight's hypothesis does account for the ascent of the plumelet as well as for the descent of the radicle, though the circumstance (I am sorry to say) had completely escaped my recollection at the time I wrote my Paper: not that I had merely glanced at Mr. Knight's hypothesis, and then, after a long interval, undertaken a refutation of it from memory; but that the notes which I did take from Mr. Knight's Paper at the time I read and perused it, contained, by some unaccountable oversight, nothing whatever on the subject of the ascent of the plumelet: I am desirous, therefore, that this declaration and admission of error on my part should appear in the next volume of the Society's Transactions, that the reparation which I now offer to Mr. Knight may be commensurate, as much as possible, with the injury he has sustained. I am, &c.

To A. MacLeay, Esq.

P. KEITH.

* Page 252.

May 25.

May 25. Mr. James Dickson, F.L.S. presented a specimen of the Misseltoe, found by him on the 20th of this month growing upon an oak-tree about four miles from Maidstone, by the side of the Medway.

The President announced, that an extensive and valuable collection of Quadrupeds, Birds and Reptiles, made by Mr. George Caley in New South Wales, has been purchased by subscription by the following Members of the Society, and lodged in the Society's Museum, viz.

	£.	s.	d.
The Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks, H.M.	10	0	0
Sir James Edward Smith, President . . .	10	0	0
Alexander MacLeay, Esq. Secretary . . .	10	0	0
Edward Forster, Esq. Treasurer . . .	10	0	0
William Elford Leach, M.D. . . .	10	0	0
William G. Maton, M.D., V.P. . . .	10	0	0
James Francis Stephens, Esq. . . .	5	0	0
The Lord Stanley, V.P. . . .	10	0	0
Thomas Furlly Forster, Esq. . . .	5	0	0
William Kent, Esq. . . .	5	0	0
Richard Taylor, Esq. . . .	3	0	0
Archibald Menzies, Esq. . . .	1	1	0
George Milne, Esq. . . .	2	0	0
Henry Grimston, Esq. . . .	1	1	0
Michael Bland, Esq. . . .	5	0	0
Duncan MacArthur, M.D. . . .	1	1	0
The Lord Bishop of Durham, H.M. . . .	10	0	0
Daniel Moore, Esq. . . .	10	0	0
Joseph Sabine, Esq. . . .	5	0	0
Rev. William Kirby . . .	5	0	0

Carried forward £. 128 3 0 .

A. B. Lam-

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward	128	3	0
A. B. Lambert, Esq. V.P.	5	0	0
Charles Stokes, Esq.	5	0	0
Sir Christopher Pegge	5	0	0
The Duke of Marlborough, H.M. . .	10	10	0
Thomas Smith, Esq.	5	0	0
Arthur Tyton, Esq.	1	0	0
Rev. J. B. Johnson	1	1	0
William Jackson Hooker, Esq. . . .	3	3	0
William Pilkington, Esq.	2	2	0
John Sims, M.D.	5	0	0
G. B. Greenough, Esq.	5	0	0
William Horton Lloyd, Esq.	5	0	0
The Earl of Mount Norris	5	0	0
Sir George T. Staunton, Bart.	5	0	0
Andrew Forster, Esq.	2	0	0
Sir Frederick Baker, Bart.	5	0	0
Daniel Stuart, Esq.	5	0	0
Philip Derbshire, Esq.	2	0	0
Rev. Thomas Rackett	3	3	0
Charles Konig, Esq.	2	2	0
Rev. Joseph Goodall, D.D., Provost of Eton College	10	10	0
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	£. 220	14	0

Nov. 3. Dr. Leach exhibited a new species of Guillemot, named by him *Uria Francsii**, discovered by Mr. Francs near Ferroe, and afterwards by Lieut. Parry, R. N. on the west coast of Greenland.

* For a description of this Bird, under the name of *Uria Brünnichii*, by Capt. Edward Sabine, see page 538.